CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for playing a strategic board game wherein the game is played by two or more players on a game board that is gridded to designate spaces such that a quantity of pieces that are identifiable as belonging to each of the two or more players are positioned within, and moved among, the spaces; the method comprising the steps of:

requiring that the two or more players take turns for being an active player that is allowed to move one or more of the active player's pieces;

allowing the active player to move or position the active player's pieces in a way that manipulates by pushing or pulling an opposing player's pieces, wherein the opposing player's pieces are pieces that belong to an opposing player that is one of the two or more players other than the active player; and wherein:

pushing is a push move that comprises using a one of the active player's pieces to push a one of the opposing player's pieces out of a first space and into a second unoccupied space, and then moving the one of the active player's pieces into the first space; and

pulling is a pull move that comprises moving a one of the active player's pieces out of a third space and into a fourth unoccupied space, and then using the one of the active player's pieces to pull a one of the opposing player's pieces into the third space.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of manipulating the opposing player's pieces further comprises the step of:

using a one of the active player's pieces to freeze a one of the opposing player's pieces, thereby preventing movement of the one of the opposing player's pieces by the opposing player.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:

providing means for any one of the two or more players to protect a piece that belongs to the one of the two or more players; such that protecting a one piece unfreezes or otherwise prevents freezing of the one piece.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the game board further comprises one or more spaces that are designated as trap spaces; and the method further comprises the step of:

removing from the game a piece that is moved into a one of the one or more trap spaces.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of:

providing means for any one of the two or more players to protect a piece that belongs to

the one of the two or more players; such that protecting a one piece prevents removal of the one piece when the one piece is in a one of the one or more trap spaces.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

limiting the step of manipulating the opposing player's pieces such that a one of the active player's pieces manipulates only a one of the opposing player's pieces that is in a space that is adjacent to the one of the active player's pieces.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

assigning a type to each one of the quantity of pieces belonging to each of the two or more players, wherein there are at least two varieties of type;

predetermining a strength value for each one of the at least two varieties of type, wherein the strength value is selected from a hierarchy of strength values from weak to strong, such that when a first piece having a first type with a first strength value is compared to a second piece having a second type with a second strength value, if the first strength value is stronger than the second strength value, then the first piece is a stronger piece relative to the second piece which is a weaker piece relative to the first piece; and

allowing only stronger pieces to manipulate weaker pieces.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the game board comprises a rectangular array of orthogonally adjacent spaces arranged in rows and columns; and the method further comprises the steps of:

assigning a first row, a second row, and a goal row for each one of the two or more players;

during the first turn of the game each active player determines an initial setup for the active player's pieces wherein the active player's pieces are arranged in the spaces within the active player's first row and second row; and

completing an instance of playing the strategic board game wherein one of the two or more players wins by being the first one of the two or more players to move a one of the winning player's weakest pieces to the goal row assigned to the winning player.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

during one turn, allowing the active player to move or cause to move one or more of the pieces a total of one to four turn steps, wherein a turn step comprises a piece being moved from one space to any adjacent unoccupied space;

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determining that a push move or a pull move uses two of the turn steps in a turn; and

requiring that a push move or a pull move must be completed within one turn.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the game board comprises a rectangular array of orthogonally adjacent spaces arranged in rows and columns; and the method further comprises the step of:

defining adjacent spaces as spaces that are orthogonally adjacent, row-wise or column-wise.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

requiring that a first push move or pull move must be completed before a second push move or pull move can be performed. $\wedge/$

12. A method for playing a strategic board game wherein the game is played by two or more players on a game board that is gridded to designate spaces such that a quantity of pieces that are identifiable as belonging to each of the two or more players are positioned within, and moved among, the spaces; the method comprising the steps of:

requiring that the two or more players take turns for being an active player that is allowed to move one or more of the active player's pieces; and

allowing the active player to move or position the active player's pieces in a way that manipulates by using a one of the active player's pieces to freeze a one of the opposing player's pieces, thereby preventing movement of the one of the opposing player's pieces by the opposing player.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of:

providing means for any one of the two or more players to protect a piece that belongs to the one of the two or more players; such that protecting a one piece unfreezes or otherwise prevents freezing of the one piece.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of manipulating the opposing player's pieces further comprises the steps of:

pushing or pulling an opposing player's pieces, wherein the opposing player's pieces are pieces that belong to an opposing player that is one of the two or more players other than the active player; and wherein:

pushing is a push move that comprises using a one of the active player's pieces to push a one of the opposing player's pieces out of a first space and into a second unoccupied space, and

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then moving the one of the active player's pieces into the first space; and

pulling is a pull move that comprises moving a one of the active player's pieces out of a third space and into a fourth unoccupied space, and then using the one of the active player's pieces to pull a one of the opposing player's pieces into the third space.

5   15. The method of claim 12, wherein the game board further comprises one or more spaces that are designated as trap spaces; and the method further comprises the step of:

removing from the game a piece that is moved into a one of the one or more trap spaces.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:

providing means for any one of the two or more players to protect a piece that belongs to

10   the one of the two or more players; such that protecting a one piece prevents removal of the one piece when the one piece is in a one of the one or more trap spaces.

17. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of:

limiting the step of manipulating the opposing player's pieces such that a one of the active player's pieces manipulates only a one of the opposing player's pieces that is in a space that is

15   adjacent to the one of the active player's pieces.

18. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of:

assigning a type to each one of the quantity of pieces belonging to each of the two or more players, wherein there are at least two varieties of type;

predetermining a strength value for each one of the at least two varieties of type, wherein

20   the strength value is selected from a hierarchy of strength values from weak to strong, such that when a first piece having a first type with a first strength value is compared to a second piece having a second type with a second strength value, if the first strength value is stronger than the second strength value, then the first piece is a stronger piece relative to the second piece which is a weaker piece relative to the first piece; and

25   allowing only stronger pieces to manipulate weaker pieces.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the game board comprises a rectangular array of orthogonally adjacent spaces arranged in rows and columns; and the method further comprises the steps of:

assigning a first row, a second row, and a goal row for each one of the two or more

30   players;

during the first turn of the game each active player determines an initial setup for the

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active player's pieces wherein the active player's pieces are arranged in the spaces within the active player's first row and second row; and

completing an instance of playing the strategic board game wherein one of the two or more players wins by being the first one of the two or more players to move a one of the winning player's weakest pieces to the goal row assigned to the winning player.

20. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of:

during one turn, allowing the active player to move or cause to move one or more of the pieces a total of one to four turn steps, wherein a turn step comprises a piece being moved from one space to any adjacent unoccupied space.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the game board comprises a rectangular array of orthogonally adjacent spaces arranged in rows and columns; and the method further comprises the step of:

defining adjacent spaces as spaces that are orthogonally adjacent, row-wise or column-wise.

22. A method for playing a strategic board game wherein the game is played by two or more players on a game board that is gridded to designate spaces such that a quantity of pieces that are identifiable as belonging to each of the two or more players are positioned within, and moved among, the spaces; the method comprising the steps of:

designating one or more spaces as trap spaces; and

removing from the game a piece that is moved into a one of the one or more trap spaces.

23. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of:

providing means for any one of the two or more players to protect a piece that belongs to the one of the two or more players; such that protecting a one piece prevents removal of the one piece when the one piece is in a one of the one or more trap spaces.

24. A method for playing a strategic board game wherein the game is played by two or more players on a game board that is gridded to form a rectangular array of orthogonally adjacent spaces arranged in rows and columns such that a quantity of pieces that are identifiable as belonging to each of the two or more players are positioned within, and moved among, the spaces; the method comprising the steps of:

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assigning a type to each one of the quantity of pieces belonging to each of the two or more players, wherein there are at least two varieties of type;

predetermining a strength value for each one of the at least two varieties of type, wherein the strength value is selected from a hierarchy of strength values from weak to strong, such that when a first piece having a first type with a first strength value is compared to a second piece having a second type with a second strength value, if the first strength value is stronger than the second strength value, then the first piece is a stronger piece relative to the second piece which is a weaker piece relative to the first piece;

assigning a first row, a second row, and a goal row for each one of the two or more players;

requiring that the two or more players take turns for being an active player that is allowed to move one or more of the active player's pieces;

during the first turn of the game each active player determines an initial setup for the active player's pieces wherein the active player's pieces are arranged in the spaces within the active player's first row and second row; and

completing an instance of playing the strategic board game wherein one of the two or more players wins by being the first one of the two or more players to move a one of the winning player's weakest pieces to the goal row assigned to the winning player.

25. A strategic board game apparatus for playing a strategic board game by two or more players, the apparatus comprising

a game board that is gridded to designate an array of spaces;

a quantity of pieces that are identifiable as belonging to each of the two or more players, wherein the pieces can be positioned within, and moved among, the spaces; and

one or more spaces that are identifiable as trap spaces for removing from the game a piece that is moved into a one of the one or more trap spaces.

26. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein:

the game board comprises a rectangular array of orthogonally adjacent spaces arranged in rows and columns.

27. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein:

a type is assigned to each one of the quantity of pieces belonging to each of the two or

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more players, wherein there are at least two varieties of type;

a strength value is predetermined for each one of the at least two varieties of type, wherein the strength value is selected from a hierarchy of strength values from weak to strong, such that when a first piece having a first type with a first strength value is compared to a second piece

5   having a second type with a second strength value, if the first strength value is stronger than the second strength value, then the first piece is a stronger piece relative to the second piece which is a weaker piece relative to the first piece;

assigning a first row, a second row, and a goal row for each one of the two or more players;

10   such that an initial setup of pieces comprises positioning pieces within the first row and the second row, and an instance of the game is won by moving a designated type of piece to the goal row.